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No. 10.—A short Recitative, for soprano, tells how Saul, by his presence, sanctions the assassination of Stephen, thus introducing the hero of the work with such unimportance as, at that period of his career, his historical character bore, and leaving it to the representation of his subsequent deeds, and their influence upon mankind, for the development of that great conception for which the treatment of these introductory incidents has admirably prepared us, and in which Mendelssohn has proved himself fully equal to his subject. The Recitative proceeds to relate the lamentation of pious men over the body of the Martyr. In this piece of plain recital, the composer, by attempting nothing, succeeds the most.

No. 11.—This lovely Chorus, which concludes the portion of the subject that is to be regarded as introductory of the principal action, is a benediction upon him who has suffered for purity and love; and, with what perfect beauty the pronunciation of this blessing is rendered, with what exquisite ideality the assurance of tranquil and eternal happiness (the genial lulling eventide, with its kissing coolness and its whispered warblings of everlasting peace and love,) is conveyed, no words can serve to say, but yet, no sense can fail to feel. Where genius has set its seal it is not for theorism to break asunder, and the sovereign charm of this mighty talisman attracts all sense as it repels all system:—we believe and we feel, we cannot understand.

A brief examination of the plan of this melodious movement may help us to a knowledge of where its beauty lies, though it cannot teach us of what it consists. The chief Subject is given at full length in the opening symphony by a resonant, mellow combination of tenor instruments, and the expression this embodies is strengthened by a phrase of gentle confirmation, introducing the harmony of the seventh upon the key-note, for the flute and clarinet. This Subject is then dispersed successively among the voices, and afterwards analogously to the form of a first movement in any instrumental composition upon the classical model, it gives place to a second subject in the fifth of the original key which will be recognised by the moving together for the first time of all the voices in harmony.

Substituted for the elaboration of the Subject with which we have now been made familiar that mostly constitutes the Second Part of an instrumental movement, is an Episode of a somewhat different character, to the words, "For, though the body die, the soul shall live for ever."

With one of those beautiful surprises in which Mendelssohn especially excels, we return to the chief Subject in the original key, and this is followed, to carry out the analogy before noticed, by the second Subject in the same key, instead of, as at first, in the key of the dominant.

The Second subject is here most artfully prolonged into a Coda of great interest, a prominent and most beautiful feature in which is formed by the two unaccompanied phrases for the voices, through which, only, during the whole movement, the figure of semiquavers ceases that is otherwise maintained, in a manner peculiar to the composer, with most fortunate effect.

The concluding Symphony is a repetition of the first, with the orchestral distribution of the principal melody reversed, those phrases that were before assigned to the tenor instruments being now given to the acute, and those that were before given to the acute instruments being now supported by the tenor.

Thus is completed the representation of the state of Christians and of Christianity at the time when St. Paul entered upon the scene of history. We see the seditions by which the Scribes incite the People; we see the fanatic fury thus induced and its violent action; we see the dignified firmness, the zealous enthusiasm of the first Martyr; we see his suffering and his intercession for mercy upon his enemies; we see his faith and his resignation. In the fierce, vindictive spirit of the People's Choruses is delineated the present character of Saul; in the gentle, peaceful beauty that contrasts these is displayed the nature of the creed which, at first so active to suppress, he was subsequently more sedulous and more influential to extend.

The purpose I have ascribed to these introductory pieces is thus, I think, powerfully fulfilled; and we are now duly prepared to enter upon the main action of the Oratorio.

*To be continued.*

#### A WORD OR TWO ON THE MUSICAL SEASON.

THE musical season may fairly be said to have come to its close—the voice of song has died away, and the sound of melody "has gone out." The votaries at the shrine of fashionable music are fled—the squares are empty, and the ceaseless mid-day din of carriage wheels is heard no more. The shutters of Belgravia exclude the light—the season is over, and the denizens of the west are breathing a purer and less smoky atmosphere than for a few short months, for fashion and convenience, they were wont to endure.

The "season" is past, and music is not excluded from the exhilarating or depressing effects of fashion—like everything else it must have its turn for recreation. But having a little leisure for reflection, we naturally ask ourselves what progress we have made in the art divine—we should like to hear an account of the stewardship of the great societies. An evident improvement may be traced in the works performed by the elder Philharmonic Society—at least, so far as the introduction of novelty is concerned; and even though we may sometimes be disposed to quarrel with the choice of music, we think it is but to echo the public voice when we express an opinion that indifferent novelty is preferable to a constant repetition of even the best music: we therefore think the committee of 1853 "wise in their generation," for an obvious improvement in this respect has been made. The new Society has made considerable advances in public estimation; its establishment and progress are great facts; the excellent ma-

terials of which the orchestra is composed redounds to the honor of the management; and here we would express our regret that a permanent conductor has not been invested with the office. The members of the orchestra are themselves fully aware of the advantages which such a proceeding would make manifest. It is to be hoped that the directors will, previously to the next gathering, become impressed with the value of this fact, and invest with the office some musician, eminent, not only as a composer, but as a conductor; without the latter qualification the post is but unfairly occupied—of course, without the former it could not be occupied at all: but let the practice of conducting an orchestra be combined with scientific knowledge as a musician, and we have no hesitation in stating that the permanent engagement of such a director would confer lasting benefit to the new Society, and tend to enhance in public estimation the position which it has acquired.

The Harmonic Union, under the superintendence of Mr. Benedict, has also taken its stand in public estimation: one of its commendatory qualities is the endeavour it manifested to encourage native talent: the production of two oratorios, the origin of which is to be traced to young English professors, gives it a claim upon the attention of the musical public: we are told that Mr. Lake's *Daniel* will be amongst the early productions of the ensuing season.

As we reported in our last Number, the Musical Union has had a very prosperous season: we are much indebted to the indefatigable director for the manner in which he has carried out the scheme set forth in his prospectus; his taste in musical matters is undeniable.

The members of the Sacred Harmonic Society, independently of having catered industriously and with the manifestation of talent in its arrangements and proceedings, have done something for the cause of the musical art, in the completeness of its performance of some of the finest of our sacred works. Under Mr. Costa's guidance, the Society has attained a position which such eminent ability alone could have given it. Some of the minor Societies are also entitled to notice—the Cecilian, the oldest amateur association, amongst the number: without ostentation, and without the aid of transcendent professional talent, it has pursued its quiet course through considerably more than half a century.

The annual series of concerts usually held at the Aldersgate-street Institution is discontinued, the Institution itself being handed over to commercial purposes. This is the fate of many of the amateur musical associations; we could enumerate some dozen or two, which, established without a settled design, have gradually become extinct within two or three years.

Under all these circumstances, we have no very encouraging thoughts upon the position which our art has assumed, since we similarly addressed the readers of this publication last year; but as it is one of the acknowledged privileges of our nature "to live in hope," we shall exercise this quality, and await the arrival of the next season, which we hope will more fully realize the predictions of the well-wishers of the musical art.—VERNON.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*The letter of Librarian of the Jersey Choral Society shall receive attention.*

\* \* \*.—Our Correspondent asks, "Would it not be wise to tune organs on a more equal plan of temperament than that which now prevails?" The equal temperament is no doubt generally to be preferred; and in cases where the organ is used in concert with the orchestra, this mode of tuning is indispensably necessary.

Mr. James E. Mann.—The Harmonium is certainly liable to get out of tune. Continental makers have been the most successful in producing the imitative effects of this instrument.

#### Brief Chronicle of the last Month.

MR. BENEDICT.—Arrangements have been made for the opening next season of Her Majesty's Theatre: Mr. Benedict is to be the director of the music.

DRURY LANE THEATRE.—This theatre has been let for a series of twelve operatic performances—the *prima donna* is announced as Madame Caradori, the celebrated *prima donna* from *La Scala*: Herr Formes is principal bass, and Herr Reichart, the tenor; the direction is vested in Herr Anschuez. Are we to hear anything more of the national opera, which a few months since was predicted as about to be established at this theatre?

M. JULLIEN AND HIS BAND have crossed the Atlantic: his first performance was to have taken place on the 22nd; we have as yet, of course, received no account of the entertainment. Many of the gentlemen whose talents in this country have enabled M. Jullien to achieve his position are members of his present orchestra; and additions have been made from some of the principal orchestras in Brussels.

THE NEW PHILHARMONIC DIRECTORS.—The Directors for the next season, elected at the Annual Meeting of the Philharmonic Society, are Messrs. Griesbach, M'Murdie, Clinton, E. Schultz, Calkin, and Anderson.

SPOHR'S "JESSONDA."—Although it does not come altogether within our province to chronicle the doings of the Anglo-Italian stage, we for the sake of the high character enjoyed by Spohr amongst German and English artists, cannot let the performance of *Jessonda* pass, without expressing a brief opinion of its claim (or rather want of claim) to public attention. We have been greatly disappointed in the work—better, indeed, for the composer's high fame, had it been altogether withheld; that the structure is good, cannot be denied—but there is in it a want of freshness, of feeling, of coloring; the instrumentation is elaborate and skilful—a nice perception of balance is apparent; but the form so carefully made, so neatly and curiously finished, so scientifically fashioned in every part, is lifeless—the body is carefully moulded and beautifully mechanized, but the living light of genius, of impulse, of feeling, is absent. *Jessonda* has appeared amongst the musical public merely for the purpose of exciting wonder how so much thought and study could have been employed to so little advantage. We are sorry for this result; but Mario's withdrawal from the character designed for him, in some measure prepared us for it. The work, by extract, is well known in the concert-room—many of its pieces are admired, and justly so,—as an opera, it is not too much to state that it has resulted in failure.

MR. JOHN PARRY.—It is with regret that we announce the retirement (on account of delicate health) from professional pursuits, of this universal favorite. To musical acquirements of no ordinary kind, and a voice, which in its prime could scarcely be matched for quality and compass, Mr. John Parry united a keen sense of the comic—not the broad humour of the mere caricaturist nor the mimicry of the grotesque, but the refined and natural feeling of a varied and really comic genius. His first essays in the course which has rendered him so famous, were made under the advice of poor Malibran—in her, whose wondrous musical ability astounded Europe, John Parry found a kind and encouraging friend: up to this time, he had confined himself to sentimental ballad-singing, and when he threw that aside for the comicalities in which he has since been so highly successful, it was a matter of regret to many, for he gave promise of being the first ballad-singer of the day. His pure taste and unaffected manner, however, eminently qualified him to excel—alike in the pathetic and the gay. There is scarcely a musician, native or foreign, however high his rank, who has not enjoyed John Parry's humour and admired his talents—Mendelssohn